

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /062 W

-----121240Z 010216 /44

R 120820Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4412

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0198

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, FT

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA-TFAI: TOP SECRET T-SHIRTS

1. CONGEN HAS RECEIVED REPORTS FROM SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES THAT CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR FIKRU MADE A SPECIAL REQUEST EARLY IN THE WEEK OF MARCH 7 TO THE SECOND DIVISION AUTHORITIES TO PERMIT BARATTOLO TEXTILE MILL TO RE-OPEN IN ORDER TO UNDERTAKE A SPECIAL PROJECT. THE PROJECT IS THE PRODUCTION OF 24,000 T-SHIRTS WHICH MARK THE WEARER AS A SUPPORTER OF THE PREDOMINENTLY-AFAR NATIONAL UNION FOR INDEPENDENCE (UNI) IN THE TFAI. THE T-SHIRTS ARE A LIGHT GREEN WITH A CIRCLE IN THE UPPER LEFT WITHIN WHICH IS "U.N.I.". IN THE CENTER OF THE SHIRT IS A MAP OF THE TFAI WITH A LINE (APPARENTLY REPRESENTING THE DJIBOUTI-ADDIS RAILROAD) THROUGH THE CENTER OF IT POINTING TOWARD ETHIOPIA. BELOW THE MAP ARE TWO HANDS CLASPED TOGETHER IN THE SYMBOL OF UNITY.

2. PERMISSION TO RE-OPEN BARATTOLO WAS GRANTED, AND PRODUCTION OF THE T-SHIRTS BEGAN IN MID-WEEK. THE PROJECT IS TERMED "TOP SECRET" BECAUSE OF EXTENSIVE EPMG SECURITY MEASURES, YET THE CONFIDENTIAL

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INTRIGUE SURROUNDING IT APPEARS TO HAVE SPARKED A WIDER KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROJECT THAN MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN THE CASE. ONE CAN ONLY SPECULATE WHY BARATTOLO IN ASMARA WAS CHOSEN FOR THIS PROJECT; EITHER BECAUSE OF THE HOPED-FOR SECRECY OR BECAUSE BARATTOLO'S TEXTILE PRINTING PROCESSES ARE MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN THOSE OF OTHER PLANTS ELSEWHERE IN ETHIOPIA.

3. COMMENT: THERE ARE TWO SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS SURROUNDING THIS PROJECT. FIRST, IT TENDS TO CONFIRM THAT, IF EVEN THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR MUST APPLY TO THE SECOND DIVISION FOR WAIVER OF THE INDUSTRIAL SHUTDOWN, SECOND DIVISION'S CONTROL IN ASMARA TRANSCENDS THAT OF THE EPMG GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE. SECOND, IT REVEALS THAT THE EPMG APPARENTLY INTENDS TO THROW ITS SUPPORT BEHIND THE UNI IN THE POWER SWEEPSTAKES IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE DJIBOUTI.
SLUTZ

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Message Attributes

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Concepts: CLOTHING, PROPAGANDA, INDEPENDENCE, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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TAGS: PFOR, PROP, PDEV, ET, FT, UNI
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